

the drifting sand, the stinging mosquito and the chilling storms, under the insecure shelter of a frail and flapping tent, took possession of them, with glad and grateful hearts, and of course we gave a party to our friends, to signalize the happy event. Our post commander Capt. Clarke was a courtly old gentleman of 60 years, a brother of "Grace Greenwood," and possessing much of her literary tastes. "Aunty Harris" was his housekeeper and he loved to entertain his friends with one of her good dinners. His favorite dish was a suckling pig, roasted whole, served with a red apple in its mouth and flanked by a bottle of fine catawaba. We had a "reading circle" that met at my quarters Saturday evenings, and we read all the shorter plays of Shakespeare, en character. Hot "Apple Jack," cold roast venison, and buttered bread were the staple refreshments.

### *A Baby Pioneer*

In these log quarters at Camp Hancock our third child was born on one of the coldest days just before Christmas: a baby pioneer! She was named Jessamine after Captain Jessamine, one of my husband's kinsmen for whom Jessamine County, Kentucky was named.



## CHAPTER XII

### BISMARCK IN 1873

Early in 1873 the agitation of the townsite question began and was a source of vexation to the citizens who were now divided into several camps. There were those who adhered to the railroad company and believed in the right of the Puget Sound company to gain title through the Pennell pre-emption—now homestead claim—for Pennell had married “Dutch Mollie” and she was keeping house in the P. S. & L. S. headquarters. This added to the unpopularity of the company and intensified the feeling of dislike on the part of the other claimants toward its agent.

The various other claimants to the townsite, each had their circle of friends who believed in their right to gain title by the pretense of holding it for agricultural purposes, others could also. There was also a large number who believed that the actual occupants of the lots were the owners, under the townsite act of Congress of March, 1868. Much ill will prevailed among these factions, and the life of Col. Sweet, attorney for the L. S. & P. S. Co., and N. P. R. R. Co., was said to have been several times in danger from the other factions.

Meanwhile, the mail difficulties of the citizens increased so greatly that something had to be done. It was decided to ask for the location of a postoffice and the establishment of a mail route. But who would keep the postoffice? The postal law forbade that a postoffice should be kept within certain distance of any place where liquor was sold, and none of the business houses could take it on that account. Scarcely were we settled in our new home before a delegation of the business men of the city called to ask us to take the office in our house. Of course we did not want it, but being now property holders, we wished to help in all ways that would conduce to the prosperity of the town, so I consented to take it temporarily, until some other place could be found for it. A petition for my appointment as postmaster of Edwinton was sent to Washington, when it was learned that Maj. S. A. Dickey, brother of Congressman Dickey of Pennsylvania, and post-trader at Fort McKean, had already received the appointment. As Maj. Dickey did not reside within the delivery of the proposed new office, he could not serve, so he appointed me his deputy, and sent his resignation in my favor to Washington.

Then it was found that married women's right to make a bond was not recognized by the government, and I could not hold the office.

Then Dr. Slaughter consented to take the office on the same condition as that on which he had bought me the cow, viz: that he was never to be called upon to have anything to do with it, and I readily assented to the agreement, because I well knew that if the postoffice, like the cow, should prove too much for me his generous nature would prompt him to come to the rescue. Dr. Slaughter was very busy now. Besides his official duties at Camp Hancock he had a lucrative practice among the citizens of the town where he was the only physician. Yet I do not think he ever charged a patient or made out a bill. The poorer people he visited gratuitously, and it was expected as a matter of course that whenever the doctor went among them the doctor's wife perforce must go along. Nor did I ever go empty handed. In this way I came to know the people intimately and from visiting the sick in their wretched homes, I saw how hard it was to be poor and friendless and I learned also that, one of life's truest pleasures is found in using the means and the gifts with which providence has endowed us for the amelioration of the sorrows of those weaker and less fortunate than ourselves. And now the friendship and gratitude of those people as manifested toward my husband and myself in those early days of hardship are very pleasant to recall. On the other hand the gamblers and saloon-keepers, when getting a prescription paid for it with the first bill they chanced to take from their overflowing pocketbooks, it mattered not whether it were five or fifty dollars, for everybody had plenty of money and no one ever waited for change.

*Edwinton, Buffalo County*

Dr. Slaughter was appointed postmaster of Edwinton, Buffalo County, in August, 1873, and was commissioned as such. His salary was fixed at twelve dollars a year. The next winter the law was changed, allowing a married woman to fill the office of postmistress, when my husband resigned in my favor and I was appointed postmistress of Bismarck, Burleigh County, and commissioned as such in August, 1874.

The first mail that arrived after the office was established, April 12, 1873, was an event to be remembered. There had been no mail for several weeks and I had gone horseback riding forgetting all about my new official dignity. On returning I saw that my house was surrounded by the entire population of the town, men, women and children all seemingly in a state of great excitement. I never thought of the mail but concluded that the house must be on fire,

and galloped up as fast as my horse could come. In the door stood the mail carrier vigorously defending the mail sack against the attacks of several able bodied citizens who were trying to take it away from him. I was greeted with a ringing cheer as I came up and half a dozen pair of long arms were outstretched to lift me from my horse, and I was carried bodily into the house, the whole crowd bursting in after us, with a whoop and hurrah. I unlocked the mail sack and emptied its contents on my dining table.

There were only a few dozen letters, not enough to go around among all that crowd. Each man helped himself unceremoniously to his own, seeming to know by instinct just which letter was his. Those who got letters snatched them up with exclamations of delight and some shed tears of joy. Those who got none were correspondingly depressed, and a number came back afterward, to be assured once more that there really was no letter for them. They had been "so sure of hearing from home that time." After that we had a room fitted up specially for the postoffice, and when the next mail arrived, there were boxes and pigeon holes all ready to receive it, and I handed out the letters myself to the impatient crowd. E. N. Holway made the boxes, and Thomas Richards, J. D. Emmons' barkeeper, made me a nice office desk. The materials from which all were made was dry goods boxes, no other lumber but green cottonwood being then obtainable.

I had written at the outset to the postoffice department at Washington for the supply of blanks, envelopes and postage stamps necessary to properly conduct the office. This letter was returned to me with the curt indorsement of the assistant postmaster general, that my requisition for supplies was not made out on the forms prescribed by the postoffice department, and could not be filled until made out on the proper blank. I had then to send to Postmaster Douglas of Moorhead for some blanks, and the supplies were sent as soon as it was received in Washington, including of course, the requisition blanks, which it would have been so easy for the department to have sent me at first. This, of course, took several weeks and thus there were no postage stamps for sale in the Edwinton postoffice for the first month of its existence. The name of the town was soon afterwards changed to Bismarck, in honor of Baron von Bismarck, the prince premier of the German empire, and at my request the name of the postoffice was changed also. Most of the letters that came there were addressed simple to "The Crossing, N. P. R. R. on the Missouri river."

Time passed on, the population of the town increased and business

prospered. The citizens then employed a man named Stickney to carry the mail to the end of the track, paying him fifty dollars per month for weekly trips. His wife kept a restaurant in a tent on upper Main street. Nearly every family in the town kept boarders. Mr. Thomas McGowan now of Custer Hotel, kept the Dakota House and later the Miners Hotel on Main street. Mr. Nicholas Comerford assisted by his sisters, all bright and agreeable young ladies, kept an eating house in the same block, and Mr. Dan Eisenberg had a large store two lots west of the Northern Pacific warehouse. At this time new people were arriving daily and new business houses were being opened on all sides. There were some five hundred people here when spring opened.

### *Cottonwood*

All the timber for building then was found along the river bank south of town, and consisted of scraggy cottonwood trees, and willow underbrush. It was all on claims held by men who believed they were living on government land and could not legally cut the timber—and who would have had recourse to their shotguns had anyone else attempted to cut it. To transport a load of lumber from Duluth, the nearest market, would have cost a fortune. For the same reason wood was scarce and dear. Lignite had not then been mined, and the wood was brought in by wood-choppers—along the river northwest of the city. It was usually green cottonwood and no one who has not attempted to keep warm by a fire made of the soggy, juicy stuff, can conceive of the suffering of the pioneers who had nothing else to burn, or of the trials to patience of the poor women who had to cook by it. Yet it could not be bought for less than five dollars per cord, and when the market was poorly supplied a load would cost seven dollars. A load of ash wood could occasionally be gotten at the rate of ten dollars per cord and by judiciously combining it with the cottonwood a fair fire could be maintained.

The boards made from cottonwood trees soon warped and became crooked. If left lying in the sun they assumed all sorts of fantastic shapes. A house built of the unseasoned lumber soon warped and the nails were pulled out, so that it was soon necessary to board over the cracks caused by the shrinkage.

In 1872, Prescott and Bly started a saw mill at the mouth of Apple Tree creek seven miles south of town and furnished all the boards that were used for building.

Previous to this all the houses had been made of rough cottonwood logs.

These log houses or "shacks," as they were called, were built usually of unhewn logs, the interstices between the logs being filled up or "chinked" with small billets of wood, and thickly daubed on both sides with a mixture of soil mixed with water. These formed the walls. It was first up as a pen, but afterward, by sawing out portions of the logs, openings of the proper size and shape were made for windows and doors. Over the top and across the center was placed the ridge pole, running from end to end of building and the space on each side of the ridge pole was covered with layers of small split logs or poles, their opposite ends resting on the walls and forming the eaves of the house. Over this was placed a layer of hay or dried grass, and the roof was then thickly covered with earth, which when neatly beaten down and leveled off completed the structure. Floors were an expensive luxury and the few that were not formed of mother earth were constructed of roughly hewn puncheons. These shacks were considered to be many degrees better than the tents and tent houses, in which the first settlers had lived—but more aristocratic houses were afterward built of hewn logs cemented with lime.

The delights of living in a log "shack" can best be illustrated by an extract from one of the "Dolly Varden Letters," which I contributed to the St. Paul Pioneer while we occupied Dr. Burleigh's mess house, then one of the best houses in Edwinton.

"Northern Pacific railroad crossing of the Missouri river, Edwinton, D. T., Oct. 20, 1872.

"Ed. Pioneer: Recent experiences in pioneering in this village have well nigh determined your correspondent to put into execution an ancient plan for the benefit of the rising generation, that was once a favorite day dream, being the production of a new series of primary school readers on an entirely original system, and designed to obviate notable defects in those then in use. That plan was not carried into effect—'cause why—your correspondent got married, and that, we are told, is the end, perhaps the chief end, of feminine existence. Certain it is that after that, not another line of that illustrated series was ever written, for which the youth of America should be devoutly thankful; all the more from having been kept so long in ignorance of the affliction they so narrowly escaped. But recent events have decided me to resume work on the long abandoned project, and I herewith present the opening lesson:

## THE DOLLY VARDEN SERIES

### Easy Lessons For Beginners

#### Lesson First

(Here follows a pencil sketch of a log cabin, which we cannot reproduce.—Ed. Pioneer.)

"This house is Dr. Burleigh's. He rents it to the government and the government lets Mrs. Dolly Varden live in it. It is a log house and has two large rooms in it. It has a nice dirt roof on top of it too. Now, once upon a time Mrs. Dolly Varden was sick, and lay abed all day. She was sick because she had been soldiering a long time in a tent just big enough for a playhouse. She was lying on the bed, humming to herself "The Cottage Was a Thatched One," etc., and looking straight up at the roof, trying to count how many logs there were in the thatching that were so crooked they couldn't lie still, when whoop! whack! down fell a large lump of dirt as large as you hand, and hit Mrs. Dolly Varden right between the two eyes, and nearly put them out. Mrs. Dolly Varden felt very cross, and said she thought the government ought to give her a house to live in that didn't have a mud cover to it. You wouldn't be so ungrateful if you could get to live in a nice log house with a dirt roof, would you?"

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#### *Food and Water*

A lucrative business during the early years of Bismarck was the sale of Missouri water, which was hauled about the streets in wagons constructed for the purpose and retailed at 25 cents per barrel. As it seldom rained then, water had to be purchased for all purposes, cooking and washing, as well as drinking.

The provisions that were then kept for sale, were of an inferior quality, and owing to the cost of transportation they were sold at exorbitant prices and those dependent upon the local store for their supplies must have suffered much. As the household supplies for Camp Hancock were obtained from the commissary department at Fort McKean, which was supplied with every delicacy, we had no cause for complaint on that score, but the poor quality of the food with which the citizens had to be content, must have been a severe deprivation to those who had come from luxurious homes in the east.

Food, however, was abundant and none were allowed to suffer, such was the generous spirit of the people. Many of the saloons had free lunch kitchens, from whence the poor were fed, and those of us who had abundant tables regularly supplied several poor families. Among the hotelkeepers, Mr. Thomas McGowan of the Dakota



House was noted for the number of poor people who were generously fed by his bounty. At this time all had plenty of money and everybody carried their purses with the strings loose. There was also a fraternal feeling among the people, and a spirit of good will extant, that prompted each to help the other while all worked together for the upbuilding of the town. Like shipwrecked mariners upon a desert shore, the pioneers who were stranded in the dreary spot were sustained and encouraged by the genial influence of mutual sympathy and mutual help.

### *The First Train*

At length there came a day when we stood with rejoicing hearts beside the railroad track where iron rails were being laid by the dextrous hands of brawny workmen and looked with tearful eyes upon the cars that followed after, and heard with joy unspeakable the whistle of the locomotive that told us our long isolation was at an end. The Northern Pacific railroad was completed to Edwinton! The first construction cars had come, and the days of danger, of fear and of privation, the days of real pioneering in Bismarck were at an end forever.

On June 5, 1873, the first passenger train reached Bismarck, an event that will long live in the memories of the old settlers. We had heard from it from day to day, as it slowly moved from station to station, stopping for a time at each siding, as the stations were called, Menoken being 17th siding, Bismarck the 18th.

At length the train reached Apple Creek and almost the entire population of the town went out to meet it. Every vehicle and horse in the town were pressed into service, many ran on foot. It was a joyous, exultant crowd that joined in the grand rush to welcome the first train to Bismarck. Dr. Slaughter, Mrs. Emmons and I went on horseback. Having good horses we were soon in the van of the shouting procession of happy citizens. The train had stopped to take water and the passengers stood on the prairie waving their hats and cheering.

At their head was a smiling, pleasant gentleman who came to me with hand outstretched and introduced himself as Mr. John Davidson of Brainerd, and who afterwards so long and faithfully filled the post of freight agent in Bismarck. With others of the passengers he greeted me as an old acquaintance. My newspaper letters had been extensively read in Minnesota, and all knew "the doctor's wife." By that name I was introduced. I had been on the frontier for years, separated as by an impassable gulf from the world of civilization, and the friends of my childhood. Many times had I

despaired of ever seeing the one, or getting back to the other. Now, in the train before me, was the link connecting me with the one and furnishing the means of revealing the other.

The cordial greetings of these strangers touched my heart, and I could not say one word in answer to their congratulations but sat silently on my horse with the tears rolling down my cheeks.

The train brought in a heavy mail and I hastened home to attend to it, happy in believing that as we now were to have regular trains, all our postal difficulties were over. In reality they were but just beginning. I had applied for and secured a continuance of the mail route from Jamestown westward to Bismarck, but had yet to learn that the mere establishment of a mail route carries with it no obligation on the part of the government to transport the mail. That is only done when it becomes a "star route" by special act of Congress. On the ordinary route, the citizens must employ and pay their own carriers. An express office had been opened on the corner of Meigs and Third streets. W. D. Barnes was express agent. The express agent was employed to carry the mail also. His charge was 10 cents per letter and newspaper, with \$3 for registered matter. The citizens paid him themselves when they gave him letters to carry east. When he came in he stood by the postoffice window and called his fee from all who received mail. The newcomers grumbled loudly at the arrangement, and a number refused to pay him altogether! This was also a bad management for the postoffice, as the people usually gave their letters to the express agent on the train, and the office received no benefit from the canceled stamps, on which the salary of the office was to be based, the agent mailing the letter at Jamestown, where a postoffice had been established. The office at this time was a great nuisance, and I endeavored to resign, but no one could be found to assume the burden.

The advent of the railroad marked a new era in the history of the promising little city at the crossing. The construction car, the gravel train and the hand car furnished the means of transportation to many. They came every day, singly and in groups, eager business men, flashily dressed gamblers, land seekers, gaudily bedecked women of the town, ex-laborers on the grade, speculators, honest men seeking new homes—men who had failed elsewhere and sought to begin life anew, together with politicians on the keen lookout for office and its emoluments. To judge from their expressions the new town was a disappointment to all of them. They evidently expected to find rows of brick blocks, flourishing schools, churches, postoffice, and fashionable society. The slow and painful process by which

the pioneers had evolved something out of nothing and started these enterprises upon the first stage of their progress was unintelligible to them. They looked with wonder upon the log shacks and board shanties in which the pioneers had spent the winter, and criticized the uncouth houses of the business men, which were really sumptuous for a new country destitute of timber or of trees worthy of the name and having no means of transportation, but which in comparison with the long settled localities of the east—which the newcomers had left behind them, doubtless appeared very small and uncomfortable.

### *Custer Arrives*

In the spring of 1873, changes had been made in the troops stationed at the Missouri river forts, and the 7th Cavalry under command of Lieut. Col. George A. Custer came overland via Yankton to take station at Fort Abraham Lincoln—the new name of Fort McKean. General Carlin remained in command of the infantry post on the hill, and General Custer's command encamped at the foot of the hill. The cavalry quarters near the river were built during the summer. A large force of laborers were at work here, and a creditable newspaper called "The Mechanics Far West" was published by them. After the arrival of the 7th Cavalry the character of the town changed materially for the worse. New dance halls were opened on Fourth street, and demi-monde congregated there in large numbers and there was no cessation in the daily and nightly routine of revelry and wickedness.

### *Colonel Lounsberry*

It was our custom each pleasant evening for the family to sit outside the door of Main street, each armed with a palm leaf fan, with which to keep off the mosquitoes. There was a little grass plot outside the door, and until other buildings were erected in that block, was a nice quite spot, after the mail had been delivered and the people gone. As we sat there one evening in May, 1873, we were joined by two pleasant gentlemen who introduced themselves as C. A. Lounsberry and A. C. Jordan, and stated that they had come to Bismarck from Minneapolis to start a newspaper. As all the people of the new city were most anxious to have a paper established, we were happy to welcome them, and give such aid as we could to the new enterprise.

In May, 1873, the survey camp was moved from Bismarck across the river to where Mandan now stands. As they were making ready to begin the survey of the line for the extension of the Northern

Pacific railroad west from Bismarck, they were attacked by Indians, and ran, leaving their instruments behind them. Troops from Fort Lincoln hurried to the rescue and killed seven Indians.

### *First Newspaper*

The Bismarck Tribune was established July, 1873, and the people came generously to its support, as they did to all enterprises of a public nature that promised to benefit the town. The first newspaper office was built on south Main street, and was a one story frame building. The people were greatly interested in it, looking upon the starting of a newspaper in the new town as equal in importance to the completion of the railroad, as indeed it was. On June 28, 1873, the third expedition to the Yellowstone left Fort Rice to complete the survey of the railroad, and the exploration of the Yellowstone country. The engineers and surveyors of the Northern Pacific railroad were under the direction of Assistant Chief Engineer Rosser, and the troops comprising the escort were under command of Gen. Stanley and accompanied by Gen. Custer, with the 7th Cavalry regiment. This party encountered hostile Indians near the Yellowstone, and on August 4 several companies of the 7th Cavalry had a sharp engagement with a body of Sioux under Sitting Bull in which one soldier was killed and Lieut. Braden wounded. Dr. Houtzinger, the veterinary surgeon of the regiment, and Mr. Balaren, regimental sutler, being in the rear, unarmed, and unsuspecting of danger, were fired upon and killed. The expedition returned to Fort Rice in the latter part of September, the engineers having completed their explorations, and mapped out fully the future course of the railroad.

Like most officers who have been stationed long on the frontier, General Custer entertained little regard for the citizens of the country, and the people of Bismarck soon had reason to regret the change from their good friend, Gen. Carlin. When the postoffice was first opened in April, Gen. Carlin allowed his military carrier to carry the mail for the citizens. In return, I loaned his carriers the mail sacks belonging to the postoffice. The sergeant on coming in from Fort Seward (Jamestown) would then stop at the postoffice. I would unlock the mail sack, take out the mail for Bismarck and the other river posts, leaving the Fort Lincoln mail in the unlocked sack, which the sergeant would then carry over to Lincoln. In going back he would stop at the office and I would place our mail for the east in the sack, with the Lincoln mail already in it, lock the sack, and the sergeant would proceed on his journey east. Only

a few moments were lost on each trip, and the whole arrangement was both convenient and satisfactory to both the military and citizens. The mail was then received in nice order. The letters for Bismarck, Fort Berthold, Fort Lincoln, Fort Rice, Fort Stevenson and Fort Buford were assorted by the route agents on the train between St. Paul and Moorhead, so there was no delay in the distribution of the local mails.

### *Bismarck Postoffice*

At my request the Bismarck postoffice had been made the separating office and distributing point for the above named posts, by special order of the postoffice department. The mail for these posts was sent for to the office by the commanding officers of Rice and Stevenson, the mails for Berthold and Buford being forwarded to those places from Fort Stevenson.

Gen. Carlin also permitted the mail from his post to be postmarked and the postage stamps cancelled in the Bismarck postoffice, a material help in forming estimates for future salary. Under the Custer regime all this was changed.

### *Custer and the Mail Bags*

After the suspension of the trains on the Northern Pacific railroad, the weekly mail overland was again carried by the military. The first mail brought in by Gen. Custer's mail carrier was taken at once to his headquarters across the river. There it could not be unlocked without a key, and Gen. Custer sent his orderly for mine. I gave it to him with a request to have both the key and the mail for the citizens of Bismarck sent back as soon as possible. The next day our mail was sent over, a hopeless jumble of letters. Every package had been untied. Mail for Bismarck, Forts Rice, Stevenson, Berthold and Buford was hopelessly mingled together. The mail for the military posts where many troops were congregated was very heavy, and for each post was larger than the mail for the citizens of Bismarck and took long to separate. Then it took time to distribute the local mail and before it was ready the patience of the citizens who were anxiously waiting for their letters was sorely tried. Then I sent to General Custer for my key. He refused to send it, saying he would keep the key and send the citizens' mail over to me. I then wrote him, calling his attention to the postal regulations which forbids a key being taken from the postoffice, stating that out of respect to his position I had transcended my instructions and that I trusted to his honor as an officer to return it. He then sent the key over by his orderly. The next trip coming back the sergeant in

charge of the mail called for the key, saying General Custer had instructed him to get it. I refused to give it to him unless he should first bring me a written guarantee from General Custer for its prompt return.

When the sergeant reported this to General Custer he became angry and cut the mail sack open with his pocket knife. Next day he sent over the mail for Bismarck and the other forts in the mutilated mail sack, and in the same confusion as before. As the mail sack was one belonging to the Bismarck postoffice, and for which I had given my receipt to the postoffice department, I forwarded it to the department at Washington with an explanation of its condition. Mutilating a mail sack is a crime and under ordinary circumstances would have been dealt with severely, but Sheridan only laughed when the postal authorities complained to him of the act. It was possibly set down to the exigencies of the service.

After that the sergeant always called at the postoffice coming in, and I unlocked the mail sacks for him, which he then carried intact to Fort Lincoln. The mail for Bismarck and the other forts would be sent over whenever it suited their convenience to send it and always in a disordered condition, requiring much time to sort it, and the impatient citizens grew very tired while they waited for the distribution of their letters.

At length I wrote to our good friend General Hazen in regard to our mail difficulties. He was a good friend of the people of Bismarck and although he looked upon them as deluded mortals seeking homes in a barren, unproductive country, he never failed to help them when called upon. Besides it was not agreeable to him to have the private and official mail for his command at Buford and Stevenson pass through the headquarters of another post with whose commandant he was on unfriendly terms.

The commanding officer at Fort Rice had meantime become cognizant of the state of affairs by his sergeant having to wait in Bismarck for the mail for that fort to be returned from Fort Lincoln. Army officers are keenly jealous of their official prerogatives and it was natural that a subordinate officer in full command of a post should resent having the mail for his post pass through regimental headquarters, aside from the direct route. Then I wrote to the postmaster general asking for additional sacks, and for instructions to be given to the route agents west of St. Paul to send the Fort Lincoln mail in a sack by itself and billed to that post. This request was granted, and the next trip the sergeant brought in two mail sacks, a small one billed to Fort Lincoln and a large one billed to

the Bismarck postoffice and containing the mail for Bismarck, Rice, Berthold, and Stevenson. The sergeant handed both sacks through the postoffice window to be unlocked and was greatly distressed because I only handed one of them out again. At his request I wrote a note to General Custer so as to shield him from blame, and stating that I had made arrangements for the mail for his post to be carried separately from the other mail thereafter. When the general read that he was said to have been very angry, and to have declared that his carrier should carry no more mail for the citizens.

But Gen. Hazen and the Rice commandant had sent complaints to army headquarters, asking for orders to direct the military mail carrier to leave mail for their posts at the Bismarck postoffice, and that was an end of the whole trouble. By the next spring I had succeeded in having the mail route between Jamestown and Bismarck made a star route and the mail was thereafter carried by the paid route agents of the postal department. The first route agents to bring mail into Bismarck were Messrs. Plummer and Tenney. The latter was burned to death in a postal car on the Northern Pacific railroad about Dec. 1, 1889. A postoffice was soon established at Fort Rice, with Capt. William Harmon, post-trader, as postmaster, and a mail route was established between Rice and Bismarck. Capt. Harmon was a brave ex-officer of the army and his wife an accomplished, noble minded lady, was the daughter of Mrs. Galpin, a noted halfblood Sioux woman of great influence in her tribe and the widow of a wealthy French trader. H. S. Parkins, who afterward married a sister of Mrs. Harmon, was bookkeeper at the post-trader's store at Fort McKean in 1872, and had an extensive ranch at the mouth of the Cannon Ball river.

From my little postoffice window I saw life as I had never done before. The entire population of the city passed in review before me on each mail day, and I believe that each man, woman and child of them regarded me as a personal friend. I wrote hundreds of letters for those who could not write. I was the recipient of countless confidences. Those who received good news in their letters turned back to tell me of it. Those whose letters bore ill tidings waited to confide their sorrows to me. For the first time in my life I understood fully my fellow men and women. The book of human nature was unclosed before me, and I read sad chapters of the struggles and despair of lost humanity.

Dr. Slaughter's office adjoined the postoffice and many painful scenes have I witnessed there.

On one occasion two men came into town, got drunk, and went

noisily about the streets. One of them was a boy of 18 years. They were shooting indiscriminately and a bullet went through Jack White's tent. The barkeeper seized a gun and returned the fire. The boy fell, shot through the shoulder. He was carried to the jail, a log building on upper Main street where White's livery stable now is, and where Dr. Slaughter, assisted by Dr. Middleton, post surgeon at Fort Lincoln, performed amputation at the shoulder joint. His father had come from Duluth, and when the amputation was being performed he came down and asked permission to stay in the doctor's office, as he could not control himself to witness the operation and did not like to be seen crying on the street. There he lay down on the lounge and sobbed and prayed and cried as I never heard a man cry before. Two weeks later the boy died, and the same scene was repeated. The poor man's greatest trouble was how to break the sad news to his wife. How he talked about the boy, telling us of his pretty boyish ways, his early promise and obedience until he fell into bad company and left home. He could not control himself to write to the poor lad's mother and gave it up after repeated trials, and it was I who finally wrote the letter that conveyed the tidings that her husband was bringing back to her the lifeless body of their only son. The man who had fired the fatal shot was afterward tried before Judge Carnette and acquitted.

Another victim of indiscriminate shooting that I saw carried into the doctor's office was William Regan, the six-foot bully of Jack White's establishment. He was shot by a sergeant of the 7th Cavalry, on Fourth street. This affair occurred on account of a woman called "Dot," who had a hairlip, with consequent impediment in her speech. Having some business one day with a worthy old gentleman of the city, who was similarly afflicted, she went to see him. Each thought the other was mimicking the infirmity and a wordy battle ensued that would have ended in blows had not those present informed them that the labial difficulty was mutual.

The sergeant stood in the door of Con Lonney's saloon across the alley from where the International Hotel now is, and fired a number of shots at Regan, who was near the store of Cathcart & Shaw, on the other side of the street. At the first shot, Regan is said to have thrown himself on the ground where he lay tumbling and rolling about in his efforts to avoid the bullets. His cries proclaimed when he was struck, and half a dozen strong fellows carried him carefully down to the doctor's office. His terrible roaring while the doctor was examining the wound alarmed everybody in the block. The bullet had passed through his thigh. When told that



it was a flesh wound and not dangerous, he arose and limped nimbly away.

Among the women of the dissolute class, Sally O'Neil, "Jack's woman," as she was called, had the reputation of being one of the most hardened and vicious. I found her one day in my husband's office, a broken-hearted creature, dying of consumption, sorely repentant, loathing her evil surroundings and most anxious to help the younger women to escape from their unhappy life. Sally O'Neil died soon after, and I believe her repentant tears were not disregarded.

The Jay Cook failure threw a depression on all the Northern Pacific country, and put an end for the time being to all operations in the way of railroad building in the Northwest. All business enterprises in the new city were temporarily paralyzed and many good citizens gave up their investments and removed from the town. On November 1st the trains on the Northern Pacific were suspended until the spring, and the people of Bismarck once more settled down to endure a long, cold and dreary winter.

The return of the 7th Cavalry to Fort Lincoln was the occasion of renewed activity in the evil haunts on Fourth street. The saloon and dance house of Mullen & O'Neil was, as before, much frequented by the soldiers from the fort. Bismarck at this time became notorious as one of the wickedest cities in the world. Newspaper correspondents would come from abroad, spend an evening in Fourth street dance houses and write up the place as typical of the whole town. Yet there never was a time in the early history of Bismarck when ladies were not secure from annoyance. The rough class were then all confined to one locality on Fourth street. The reputable citizens having been resolved from the first that the locality of their homes should be free from the intrusion of this class.

On the morning of Nov. 11, 1873, our servant girl who had gone as usual to the N. P. Clarke Market, which was kept by A. Gates, where the Pacific Hotel now is, to fetch the steak for breakfast, returned with a startling tale. The Mullen & O'Neil dance house had been attacked after midnight the night before by soldiers of the 7th Cavalry and Mullen and one of the soldiers had been killed. A gambler named George Whalen had the same day shot a soldier named Frank King in a saloon at "The Point," which had now become a low resort, much frequented by soldiers from across the river, who came over in skiffs and canoes. Whalen came up to town and was concealed by Mullen. The rest of the story can best be told by the evidence of J. J. Johnson before the coroner's jury:

"Did you see any shooting last night in or about the dance house of Mullen & O'Neil? If so, state to the jury what took place."

"I was in good hearing distance all the time. Some parties were kicking and making a noise at the front door. Mr. Mullen told them to go away, but they still kept kicking and pounding. Mullen said, 'What do you want?' The answer was 'We want to come in.' Mullen told them to go away several times. But this time Hannegan (the barkeeper), told Mullen to not open the door, and Hannegan and Mullen, I think, had a scuffle. Mullen took down the iron bar and opened the door. Before he opened the door, the parties outside asked Mullen not to shoot immediately. After the opening of the door I heard some person say, 'Dave Mullen, what is it you want?' Immediately after I heard a shot, and I think it was a gunshot. Mullen said, 'Oh Denny!' and I heard him fall and there was ten or fifteen shots fired in quick succession. I put on my pants and slippers and ran out of the back door. I saw a party which I thought to be soldiers running every way. I heard one man say, 'Let us burn the place!' then I came back through my house, and the first thing I saw was a soldier lying there dead in front of Chris Gibson's place. Then I came to Mullen's door, I saw Mullen lying dead, and found Mr. Hannegan badly wounded in the head."

"How do you know the attacking party were soldiers?"

"They wore uniforms and brass buttons, and I think they had needle guns."

Another witness testified that five or six of the soldiers came back for the body of their comrade; that he was breathing loudly when they lifted him up, but then fell back dead when they ran and left him. He had been shot through the breast by a pistol bullet.

The verdict of the coroner's jury was as follows:

We, the jury in the above entitled cause, after due deliberation, do hereby give the following verdict,—to-wit: That David Mullen did on the morning of Nov. 11, 1873, come to his death from a gunshot wound fired by a person dressed in the garb of a soldier, said gunshot ball entering his forehead and passing directly through his brain.

M. H. Kellogg, Foreman.

J. A. Emmons,

R. R. Marsh,

J. P. Dunn,

Alexander McKenzie,

Asa Fisher,

I. C. Adams, Justice of Peace, assisting in absence of the Coroner.

All efforts on the part of the citizens to find the soldier who fired the shot proved unavailing. Gen. Custer promised to investigate the case thoroughly, but if he made any discoveries the civil authorities never learned of them. Whalen, the gambler, who was the first cause of the trouble, disappeared, and no one was ever punished for the events of that memorable night.

In November, 1873, Dr. Slaughter was notified from department headquarters that his resignation, filed in August, 1872, would now be accepted, unless he chose to return to field service, and so he became in name what he had long been in reality, a citizen of Bismarck.

## NEWS ITEMS FROM THE BISMARCK TRIBUNE NOVEMBER 19, 1873

The last train left Bismarck Monday, the tanks have been dismantled, the help all discharged and the road closed for the winter. (Mail was brought from Fargo overland all winter.)

The dance halls of Bismarck were closed temporarily on account of trouble with Fort Lincoln soldiers.

Jack O'Neill received "one of them things." It had a skull and crossbones and was signed "One hundred and one." Dennis Hannifin told him that the skull and crossbones meant "no quarter" and the "One hundred and one," a full company of Infantry. Jack and Sal took the next train for Oshkosh.

Under the heading, "The Battle of Mullin's Corner," appeared the following: "Dave Mullin, no doubt, gave his last dose of 'hush up' when he opened his door and fired, killing Dalton.

"The soldiers from Fort Lincoln fired a volley from their needle guns and Dave was dead.

"Dave was a desperado, yet he had his good points and the statement that he was mourned by none is not true. He had his friends . . . though few in number. The shot that carried relief to so many Bismarck hearts caused more than one heart to bleed. Dave was a desperate man, chased from one state to another by the law, he determined to be driven no further, but die here or be let alone. Ever expecting attack, he was prepared for it. He had been engaged in two shooting scrapes here, but those who knew best the circumstances assert that he was provoked and blame him for shooting at drunken men. He was doomed, however, and died as he said he would, in his own house."

A committee appointed by Pioneers to select some person to write a pamphlet setting forth the advantages of the new cemetery, agreed upon Mrs. Slaughter who wrote "The New Northwest." Thou-

sands of copies were printed and sent to the East and even to foreign countries.

J. J. Jackman appointed Court Commissioner for Bismarck District.

Western Minstrels of Fort Rice, D. T., preparing to make Bismarck a visit.

Soldiers being paid off and making things lively.

A Fort Buford butcher shoots an Indian pony by mistake and pays \$40.00.

The Northern Pacific has the contract for the transportation of military freight and will establish a "military depot" in the city.

A re-hearing granted in court at St. Paul on the Bismarck town site case.

General Manager Meade says trains will be running to Bismarck by the middle of March.

M. Costello, clerk in Sutler's store at Fort McKean, froze his hand on a trip to Fargo and amputation will probably be necessary.



## THE PIONEERS

### *They came*

Those glorious pioneers  
Heedless of forest, of ice and snow,  
Carrying His word in spite of fears  
Obeying the voice which bade them go.

### *They saw*

God's forests, His lake and stream  
The challenge of a home in the wild,  
They saw the sunset's golden beam  
In his great out-of-doors undefiled.

### *They built*

The Church with wisdom rare  
In the center of vilage and town;  
The library, school and place of prayer  
Where the power of God came down.

### *They left*

A heritage noble and true  
For those who should follow along;  
A duty for me; a trust for you  
With a prayer and a glorious song.

DR. EARNEST C. PARISH

## CHURCH BUILDING ON THE FRONTIER

It is not definitely known when the first missionaries came to Dakota. The party of Lewis and Clarke (1803-6) were the first white men to explore the Missouri river to its mouth, and the report of their expedition in 1814 was doubtless the first information printed in regard to this region.

Father DeSmet built St. Mary's mission in the Bitter Root valley in 1842, and the first effort of the Jesuits toward the evangelization of the Dacotah Indians was probably coincident with that date.

As Bismarck was the first white town to be built on the Upper Missouri, the history of the religious development of the northwest here must have its starting point.

Yet let it not be forgotten that the nation which preceded us had its superstitions and its forms of worship, not greatly unlike our own. The American Indian is not an idolator. He worships no visible god. His religion is more nearly allied to Christianity than that of any so-called heathen nation in the world. His "Great Spirit" synonymous with the white man's God. His "happy hunting ground" corresponds to the heaven of the true believer. Indeed, like many a white Christian, he believes, not only in a future reward for himself, but in a place of punishment for his enemies. He is moved only by the mystic and invisible, and rejects all tangible forms in his worship.

Living near to nature, he believes in the soul's immortality, and is true to the simple faith of his fathers that has come down to him unchanged through many generations of traditions.

It is a part of his religion to destroy his enemies and to inflict upon them torture and ignominious death. It is this belief, so diametrically opposed to the teachings of Christianity, instilled into his mind in childhood, and to which he faithfully adheres, that are those of a barbarous people, and in his native state, he is free from the minor vices which characterize the white Americans.

To the high credit of the tribal Indians, be it said, there are no blasphemous words in their language. In none of their dialects is it possible to curse or swear. Profanity is an unknown and impossible vice, and reverence, an inborn virtue in their simple minds. But

imitative to a high degree they speedily learn the habits of the whites, with whom they come in contact. Let any of the wild tribes be encamped, for a short time, near a military post, or an Indian agency and they speedily adopt many of the customs of civilization, and even the children learn to swear in very good English.

Thus with reverent disposition and receptive mind, the wild Indian readily imbibes the truths of Christianity, as he is susceptible of a high degree of religious sentiment. The early Catholic missions founded by the priests of that church, the wild tribes of this region were fruitful of many converts. Nor were other denominations idle in this wide, but dangerous field of Christian effort. As the Indians were gathered into agencies, and fed by the government, competition and sometimes contention arose among the various religious denominations in the east, for the privilege of establishing missions among them, under the protection of the government. At Fort Berthold the American Missionary Association, early started a mission which was carried on under the auspices of the Congregational church. For nearly forty years some 1,500 Indians of the (three nations) Arrickaree, Mandan, and Minneterees, had been living at Berthold and many of them were regular attendants at the mission church.

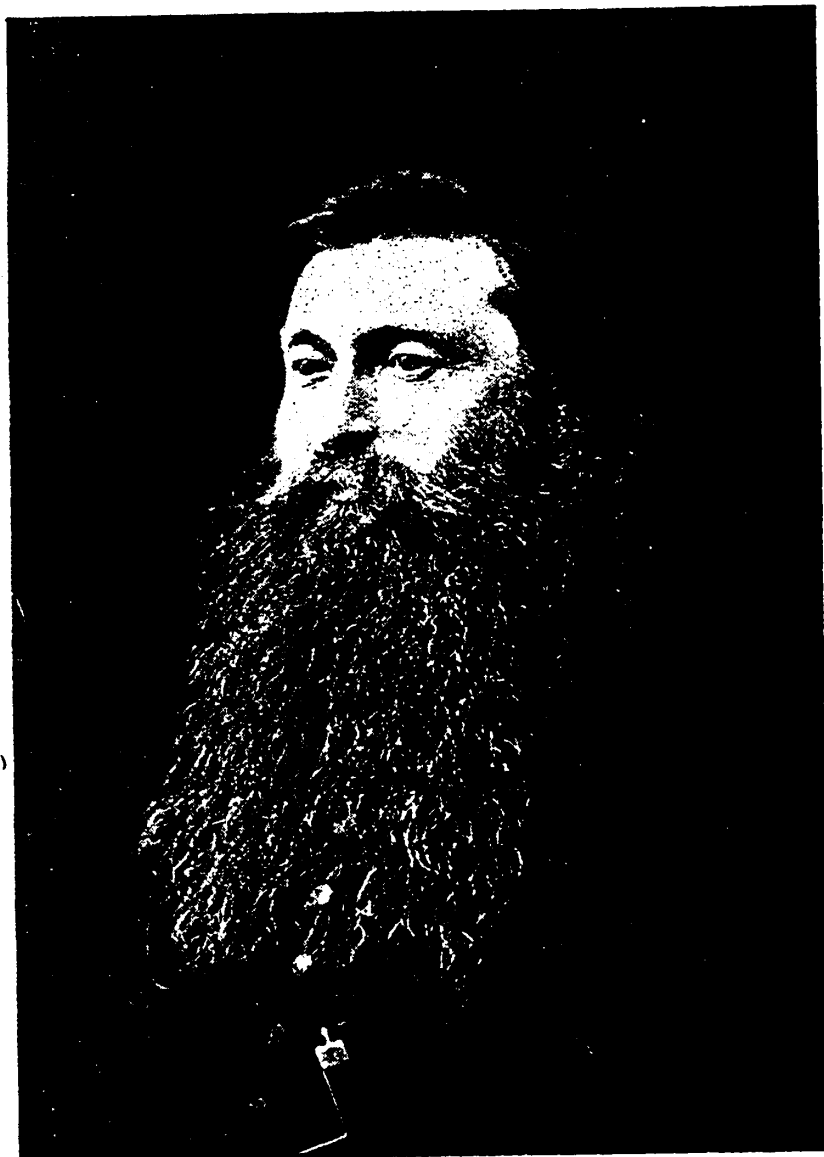
At the agency at Grand River, which was afterward removed to Standing Rock, on account of the Grand River agency becoming denuded of timber, were some 3,000 Sioux, comprising the tribes of the upper Yanktonais, lower Yanktonias, Onkpapa and Blackfeet, among whom a prosperous mission had been maintained by the Catholics under the supervision of the Right Reverend Bishop Marty, O. S. B., with Fathers Jerome and Stephan in charge. A handsome chapel and school buildings were early erected there. Under the same benign management were the thousand and more Sioux of the tribes of the Sisseton, Wahpeton and Cuthead Sioux at Devils Lake, who had a comfortable chapel and school, taught by the Grey Nuns of Montreal. The Sisseton and Wahpeton bands of Sioux at Sisseton agency, and who numbered some 1,500 souls, had fine church buildings, under charge of the Presbyterian denomination, and a congregation with a membership of 426.

Rev. Dr. S. R. Riggs was a missionary among the Dakotas for forty years, and assisted by his son, Rev. T. L. Riggs, preached in the Dakota tongue to these reclaimed children of the forest. The word Wahpetons, or properly, Wahpetonnans, means "those who dwell in villages in the woods," and Sissetons or Sissonnans, as it was originally, "dwellers in villages of the marsh."



Cheyenne River Agency, where were some 2,000 Sioux of the Blackfees, Sans, Arc and Minnecohjos tribes and the Two Kettle Band of Sioux, was the seat of the Protestant Episcopal mission. The American Missionary association also maintained a mission and church at Peoria bottom, under the auspices of the Congregationalists.

The Episcopalians also maintained other missions among the Sioux on the Missouri river, notably among the Ogalala, and Lower Brule tribes, who belong to the Tetons, or Tetonwans, meaning "Prairie dwellers." The Yanktonwanna Sioux, who dwelt on the east side of the river, on the "Plateau du coteau du Missouri," were so named as being "dwellers in villages at the end," or upon heights, and they were venerated by the other tribes as superior, and were



FATHER GENIN

called Wiciyelia, which means, "The People," The Yankton-wanna and the Wahziazah Sioux of the Black Hills were susceptible of religious culture, and were ready listeners to the Jesuit fathers, who early visited this region, and passed fearlessly back and forth among the wild warriors, whose "hearts were bad" toward the pale faces, who had invaded their land with "thunder sticks," (guns) and "Minneseche" or "bad water" (whiskey) but who soon learned that peace and truth and kindness were the fruits of the religion symbolized by the cross.

As the Catholic priests had been the earliest messengers of peace to the native Indians, so also were they the first ministers of hope to the isolated whites, who were condemned to lonely exile in this hostile realm. They were the religious pioneers of the northwest. Their kindly priests and sweet voiced sisters came to us at posts of danger on the frontier, where the paid chaplains of the army would not serve, braving the cold of winter and the danger of meeting cruel death at the hands of Indians, to carry the comforts of religion to the soldiers of the army, who, pent up in isolated forts, were compelled to live without the solace of religion, and to die without its blessings. During the first year of uncertain life in the new city, mass was frequently celebrated in the homes of the Catholic citizens, by the good priests who came through snow and heat alike to minister to their people. Father Reller of Duluth preached the first sermon in the new city, in July 1872, and the movement to build a Catholic chapel and school in Bismarck was early inaugurated.

The first Protestant ministerial service held in Bismarck, was by Rev. H. Swift of the Protestant Episcopal church on March 8th, 1873, for the baptism of little Jamie, second son of Lieutenant Humbert of the 17th Infantry. It was held in the hall in the upper story of the Capitol Hotel.

#### THE FIRST CHURCH BELL

The Methodists were also early at work in the new city, but did not succeed in building a church until some years later. When they did so, the steamboat bell we had used on the Congregational church, and which we had returned to Mr. Emmons on the abandonment of that church, and I believe it is the same now used on their church on the corner of Fifth and Thayer streets, that stands on the lot originally occupied by the livery stable of Donehue and McCarthy. The small frame house that stands now near to this church on the west, was built by a woman named Hattie, afterwards called, "Antelope" from having a pet antelope which Geo. Giblis threw through her

window and killed. She had been an officer's servant at Fort Buford, and drowned with two men while crossing the river from Fort Lincoln in a skiff. Edward Donahue afterward lived in the house, and his young wife died there, and her death was greatly regreted by all.

In later years the Episcopalians, and afterwards the Baptists and Swedish Lutherans, organized congregations and built churches. Among these and the other denominations herein enumerated, were many men and women who did good service and deserve honorable remembrance, but it was the children in their first humble meetings in these western wilds, who laid the foundations of the church in Bismarck, and thus became the unconscious pioneers of the cause of Christ.

#### FIRST SUNDAY SCHOOL IN BISMARCK

The Presbyterian Sunday School of Bismarck had a most interesting history. It was first organized by Mrs. Linda W. Slaughter, in a tent at Camp Hancock, in August, 1872, and was taught by her, under the name of the Bismarck Sabbath School, until after the completion of the N. P. railroad in June, 1873, when it was formally organized under the name of the "Bismarck Union Sunday School", with officers as follows: Superintendent, Linda W. Slaughter; Secretary, Col. C. A. Lounsberry; Treasurer, James H. Emmons; Librarian, W. H. White; teacher of Bible class, John W. Fisher; intermediate class, Charles F. Hobart; infant class, Miss Aida Warfel. After the completion of the Presbyterian the name was changed to Presbyterian Sunday School of Bismarck and I. C. Adams was elected superintendent, succeeded by H. F. Douglas and later by John W. Fisher, who served long and faithfully in that position.

In 1872 a small library of Sunday school books was purchased by Dr. Slaughter, and presented to the Bismarck Sabbath school. These were numbered, and the number and name of the school was written in each volume by Mrs. Slaughter. In 1873 large additions were made to the library by Rev. D. C. Lyon on behalf of the Third Presbyterian Sunday school of Philadelphia, the Presbyterian missionary who preceded Rev. I. O. Sloan, and by Rev. G. B. Gates, on behalf of the Congregational Society. These were also numbered, and the name "Bismarck Union Sunday School instead of Bismarck Sabbath School" was written in each volume by Mrs. Slaughter. These books were in constant use during the early years when reading matter was scarce. At the time the name of the school

was changed the last time, the first name written in the library books crossed out and the name Presbyterian Sunday School of Bismarck was written below by the librarian.

After the lapse of so many years it was not believed that any of those little books would be in existence, but two of them have been secured for preservation by the State Historical Society. They were found in the belfry of the church. One of them is entitled "Memoir of John Long Bickteth," on the fly leaf is the name "Bismarck Sabbath School", the handwriting of Mrs. Slaughter, and underneath, in the handwriting of Mr. W. W. White, is the name of Presbyterian Sunday School No. 237.

The first church organized in what is now the State of North Dakota, was at Bismarck in July, 1873, by Rev. D. C. Sloan, Presbyterian Missionary. It was in a tent erected by Geo. W. Crummy, of St. Paul, for gambling purpose, left but had never been used for any purpose, and it is presumed it was "hoodooed" for gambling purposes, for its owners soon failed and left the country "broke".

Mr. White, was then a lumber dealer in Bismarck, later he became a prosperous lumber merchant of Fargo. He was very active in the Methodist church at Fargo and White Hall at the First Avenue Methodist Church of Fargo is named in his honor.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SEQUEL TO "FORTRESS TO FARM"

The story of "From Fortress to Farm" or "Twenty-three Years on the Frontier" was written by my mother, Mrs. Linda Slaughter, for the Bismarck Tribune and published many years ago as a serial but was never finished.

The fortresses were Rice, Lincoln, Green, and Hancock, and her history of them is complete, giving an accurate picture of life there, as well as the early picture of Otter Crossing, Edwinton and Bismarck. The "farm" part of her serial, "From Fortress to Farm" was never completed, and while holding down a claim is by no means so romantic and thrilling as the days at the Missouri River forts, yet it played its important part in the development of the state. So I have written my recollection of our life on the claim.

### FROM FORTRESS TO FARM

Our first home in Bismarck was at Camp Hancock, where I was born. It is still owned by the U. S. Government and is now the site of the weather bureau. Later my parents purchased the log hotel building owned by the Anthonys on the corner of Second and Main street with the doctor's office in front, living room in the back and an outside stairway that led to "Pioneer Hall" where civic meetings were held. Here my sister Linnie was born in 1876. Later my parents purchased the lot next door and built a log government warehouse and the rent from this soon paid for itself. They purchased the Congregational church building on the southwest corner of Court House square for the Congregationalists had abandoned their mission, and sold it to Dr. J. P. Dunn to replace his drug store which had burned.

The proximity of Camp Hancock in time made the Second street, Main property undesirable as a residence so my parents sold it and moved to Fourth street where they purchased a house and lot where the Guaranty Bank now stands.

But with advent of the Seventh Calvary at Fort Lincoln, dance halls and saloons multiplied on Fourth street till it was known as the "bloody Fourth", so again my parents decided to move. My father had loaned John W. Plummer \$250 to prove up on his 80 acres.

adjoining Bismarck taking his word for security, afterwards taking ten acres for the loan, and later exchanged the government warehouse building for another five acres. These ten acres are now the "Country Club" property. It was then named "Villulla" after my father's old southern home. We children were delighted to move to the country. The same panorama of shining river and blue misty hills that are now seen from the porches of "The Country Club" were ever before my childhood's eyes. But with a difference. Then old Fort McKean crowned the highest summit with the majestic cotton woods planted by General Carlin outlined against the sky. We could hear the sunset gun boom across the darkening river and knew that Old Glory came proudly down with the color guard in Civil War blue, standing at attention.

Majestic steamboats like great white birds, sailed up and down the "Smokey Water, from Fort Benton to St. Louis a scene that appealed to my mother's poetic temperament and she wrote the following apostrophe to

### THE RIVER

O dark mysterious river, since the birth  
Of infant Time, how many suns have risen,  
Since first thy muddy waters lapped the earth,  
Poured from Creation's fount a mantling chrism  
Of joy, health giving, endless and sublime!  
How oft the grave physicians of the year,  
With fourfold hands have pressed thy pulses chime,  
Ice-bound—green-willowed—sand-strewn—frost-rimmed— clear,  
Each changing season fairer than the last.  
What ancient tomes, volumes of priceless cost,  
Forgotten records of a mystic past,  
Lie buried in thy depths, forever lost.  
What scenes these lone shores witnessed  
When the hand of struggling daring pioneers  
Inlaid the firm foundation of the land  
With brawny arms, in mingled hopes and fears.  
The same sun rose and set as now, and yet  
What mournful stories could thy mute shores tell  
Of effort unrewarded, how the great souls met  
The solemn death scene and the last farewell.  
Behind the mystic, gorgeous evening clouds  
There may we find when life's long day is done  
The Indian's Great Spirit and the white man's God  
Behind the western gates, beyond the setting sun.

One incident that determined my mother to move from Fourth street was a serio-comic one, but it made a deep dent in my infant memory. We had a hired girl Molly, daughter of the first Mayor of Bismarck, who was married to a private soldier at Camp Hancock; a rollicking Irishman. He came one evening with a "false face" or mask on and scared we children badly, to invite his wife to go with him to a mask ball at Fort McKean, given by the Infantry. The next evening he came staggering to the house, threw himself on his wife's bed and began to chant in his rich baritone "I am going to die to night. Kiss me goodbye Molly darling. The angels are making my bed in heaven. Goodby, Molly darling. She knelt by his side whispering "yes, yes Teddy, but not so loud". He sang all the louder, I'll be with the angels before morning, Molly darling. Me bed is made in Heaven."

Not knowing it was a crying or singing jag, my mother and we children were upset, thinking it was a deathbed scene, and mingled our tears with Molly Hackett's.

Just then my father strode in demanding what "all this uproar meant;" felt the soldier's pulse, yanked him off the bed and threw him out of the house and told him to go some where else to do his dying. "Molly darling" was very indignant at the doctor's drastic cure and threatened to leave in the morning. She sent a note next day to her soldier boy who came to the door cold-sober, first enquiring timidly if the doctor was home, and told her to stay where she was if she knew when she was well off.

My parents had high ambitions when they platted off Vilulla into lots and named the streets. Jessamine Avenue extended from Charlotte street west and runs into Carwin avenue. This is the Prospect Heights addition to the city of Bismarck.

The plot of land in front of the "Vilulla" acreage was the favorite camping grounds of the Indians and their visits back and forth from the reservation. Over night a cavalcade of Indian families, ponies, and wagons would arrive, set up their teepees for a few weeks' stay, and then vanish as suddenly as they came.

The Indians were inveterate horse traders and how they coveted my father's tall bay thoroughbred "Kentucky Belle." They came in different parties, wanting to trade holding up their fingers they would indicate how they would give five for one, six for one, etc. They were imperatively refused and would depart with sullen backward glances. But one time two bold young warriors decided to swap any way, taking a chance that fear of them would make the trade stand. (This was about five years after the Custer Massacre,

and while the soldiers were being withdrawn from the forts and the Indians confined on reservations, a smoldering feeling of resentment caused occasional reprisals)

One afternoon five Indian ponies were found in the barn and Kentucky Belle gone, but tied in plain sight behind a wagon box in the midst of the Indian teepees. My father flew into a towering rage that made him reckless of consequences, and that carried him swiftly to the Indian encampment. Not an Indian was to be seen, old or young, they were all hidden in their teepees with tent flaps drawn. As he untied his horse, he felt hostile eyes watching him and said afterward he expected to be shot in his tracks. His friends told him afterwards all that saved him was the Indians knew him to be a "big medicine man" who might work bad magic. However, he showed no fear, marched back to the house, leading his horse, where my mother and hired girl, Mrs. Hill, were hysterical with fear. He turned the Indian ponies loose and the Indians lost no time in breaking camp. They pulled down their teepees, loaded wagons and travois and among much commotion and dust departed north on the Fort Berthold stage road.

My father thought it was not safe to leave the horse in the barn that night so at dusk he took her to Stoyell's livery stable on Fourth street. After supper Mrs. Hill, the hired girl, went to the kitchen door to throw out dish water when she gave a frenzied yell that there were two Indians on each side of the door and a dozen more at the barn. The lamp was hastily extinguished, the doors locked and we all huddled together too scared to cry. After an eternity we heard the sound of wheels and a friend brought my father home who reassured us by telling us these "shadowy forms sneaking by in the darkness were just imagination, but refused to go out and investigate for themselves. Morning found us safe and agreed that the Indians had come back either to get the horse or give us a good scare. By now they were miles away.

Time marched on and settlers who believed in North Dakota came to make permanent homes on the land offered by the government.

One day we had a strange visitor, an old frontiersman who called on us and stated he had taken up claims, he and his son-in-law, in northern Burleigh county, and he wanted a school for his youngest son and his grandchildren. He had obtained a promise from a neighbor to have school in one of his rooms (the neighbor had a two-room log house and large family.) School was to begin at once if my mother would come and teach the school. He had picked out



two claims for us, a homestead and tree claim and by living on them six months in the summer, during the school year, "proving up" the claim would be easy. My father ridiculed the whole idea—what did we want with a lot of worthless land out in the wilderness? So the old frontiersman made another appeal, this time to my mother. No wonder she was named "Zezula, the squaw that helps" for his appeal of children deprived of schooling was not lost on her, and she made arrangements that next week would see us there "to look over the situation."

We had a driving team of two white ponies and a "phaeton", a carriage with a fringed canopy top, but for this trip to the unknown country, a driver was engaged who knew the way with the best team the livery barn afforded. So early one morning, with a blue sky overhead and great masses of fleecy clouds, we started across the prairie green and abundant with flowers. The heavy rains of the spring had left the sloughs and low places with shining water from which rose great flocks of geese and ducks, who flew in formation to the lakes in the unknown wilderness to the north. We sang as we drove along to while away the time the old version from a cowboy singer (Yes, indeed! we had cowboy singers in those days). Mother had copied the words as the cowboy sang them in the '80's, for the words of the refrain appealed to her:

"O give me a home where the buffalo roam  
And the deer and antelope play,  
On the bluffs and high rocks  
Where the antelope flocks  
Beside the broad river all day;  
The prairie's all checkered with buffalo paths,  
Where once they walked proud to and fro.  
But it's now they've grown dim  
Where hunters have been,  
Red men have laid them so low,  
Beside the broad river, where seldom if ever  
Those poisonous surviges grow.

The cowboy singer explained that the "poisonous surviges" were the loco weed found along the Platte river that, when eaten, drove the cattle crazy.

Our driver, a young Irish boy, became inspired, and when we were through, he sang a rousing song of which I recall the refrain

"There I met my Hidatsa girl,  
On the shores of Travois Trail"  
And then a chorus to another song.  
"Come along, come along, our Uncle Sam is great,  
Come from every highway, come from every state,  
Come along, come along, don't you be alarmed,  
For Uncle Sam is rich enough to give us all a farm."

Yes! Uncle Sam would give us all a farm if we could support ourselves in the meantime, for there was no way to make a living while anticipating a crop. The tragedy of living on a claim without adequate funds or protection caused many a casualty among settlers and livestock, before they paid the price that experience teaches.

However, our outlook on claim life was brighter, for we only lived there summers for five years, so I recall no blizzards or coyotes howling at our door nor did we perform any of the duties of "The Western Wife" as described by the South Dakota poet, Wm. Chamberlain.

"She walked behind the lagging mules  
That drew the breaker through the soil,  
Hers were the early rising rules,  
Hers were the eyes of wifely toil.  
The smitten prairie blossomed fair,  
The sod home faded from the scene;  
Firm gables met the whispering air,  
Deep porches lent repose serene  
O western mother! In thy praise  
No artist's paints or poet sings  
But from the rosary of days  
God's angels shape immortal wings."

But we held down the claim and that was undeniably hard labor with "claim jumpers" looking for improved claims, but we were never molested, for we lived there all summer and the claim jumpers, like the grasshoppers disappear in the winter.

But to return to our journey. Following a dim trail, the driver, who professed to know the trail, finally admitted that he was to drive eighteen miles to a certain shanty and then inquire.

When we arrived there the man was not at home, and the woman knew nothing of roads. She pointed toward a hill and said sometimes the Fort Berthold stage came in that direction. Mother asked if we could get dinner there. She shook her head saying there was

nothing to eat in the house except old potatoes and milk. Her husband had gone to Bismarck to get flour. People were poor in those days in ways that can scarcely be comprehended now.

So we left the lonely shack, the driver following a trail which soon played out, and we were lost in the Bad Lands near the Missouri River. Then one of the horses played out too, and laid down.

My mother declared indignantly that the livery stable had promised her the best horses for the long drive and she had paid accordingly. The boy defended his employer saying that he didn't know that some of the boys had raced her on the race track the whole evening before against a horse some Indians had brought up from Standing Rock.

Despairingly we scanned the horizon and saw a herd of cattle on the faraway hills with a boy herding them. He saw us and rode toward us. He had never heard of our destination but knew of Peterson's, which was several miles east in the right direction.

The exhausted horse revived, and by walking slowly and allowing her to rest frequently we arrived tired and hungry at our destination where we were warmly welcomed.

The first summer on the claim "gold" was discovered. Someone had found samples of "pyrates" that glittered like gold and a mad stampede was made from Bismarck and elsewhere to Ecklund township. Joe Dietrick ran a stage line to the "gold field" at five dollars a passenger and claims were staked all over the township. An analysis proved it to be "fool's gold" and the speculators dug up their stakes and retreated, and once more it was a simple pastoral community.

The Indian menace was gone, but prairie fires were the scourge. Three times was our claim house destroyed in as many summers. In spite of fire breaks the flames, swept by the wind, leapt over all barriers.

If the prairie fire was seen in day time, all hands turned out to "fight fire." School would be dismissed, the younger children sent home, and all old enough including the teacher would follow the wagons of water barrels, and with wet sacks beat out the flames, following the line of fire for miles and sometimes starting "back-fire" toward the "head fire."

Horse thieves were another menace to the claim holders. The horse owners would stay up all night and camp beside their picketed horses with loaded guns. To lose a team of horses meant bankruptcy for the horses represented the claimholder's wealth and means of livelihood.

When the rumor reached us that three horse thieves had been

captured by a posse in McLean county and hung to telegraph poles, the claim dwellers drew sighs of relief and again slept in peace.

Adjoining our claim, a narrow dirt road separating us from them, lived a school teacher from Minneapolis who married a young man in the neighborhood. She bought half the railroad section adjoining ours solely because she wanted my mother for a neighbor clinging to her companionship. Her land was hilly and unproductive and they had a hard time raising their little family till the coal barons discovered inexhaustible supplies of lignite underneath it and paid her a hundred thousand dollars for her land. The family sold and moved to Minneapolis.

Our tree claim was one of the first planted. We bought the trees, box elder and cotton wood, from Oscar Will, who was just starting in business in Bismarck, little saplings they were, and hired a neighbor to plant them and cultivate. They grew but after a prairie fire swept over them, there were not enough left to be counted, and again the tree claim had to be planted. For when "proving up" on the claim a certain number of trees must be growing by actual count of two disinterested parties.

We moved back to Bismarck after "proving up" on our land and later, my sister Linnie and I, returned to teach when five white school houses dotted the prairies in Ecklund township.

# STATE SONG FOR NORTH DAKOTA

By LINDA W. SLAUGHTER

(Tune: Nettleton's "*Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*")

## I

By the banks of the Missouri  
Southward flowing to the sea,  
To the Red and Northern River  
By our lake's deep mystery  
Lies the state of North Dakota  
That all people join to laud  
Friendship rules in dear Dakota  
This, our motto, "Trust in God."

## II

From the timbered Turtle Mountains  
To the James' winding tide  
By wide coteaux, fair and fertile,  
Where the Sheyenne's waters glide,  
Stretch the plains of North Dakota.  
Farm and homestead free to all,  
Foreign lands to free Dakota  
Sent their people at our call.

## III

In the great Red River Valley  
In the deep alluvial soil  
Corn and grain now grow luxuriant  
Meed of settlers manly toil.  
In the west and northern portions  
Lignite mines in wealth abound,  
Here in Nature's grand profusion  
Hidden treasures rich abound.

## IV

On her plains, a myriad cattle  
In green pastures fair to see  
Roam the hills and meadows verdant  
Like the breezes wide and free;  
On the range in North Dakota  
Flocks of sheep drift to and fro,  
Corn and flax in our Dakota  
On the levels freely grow.

## V

Wondrous scenes and crags majestic  
Fill the west with views sublime,

Peace reigns here but men were valiant  
In the stirring battle time;  
Foreign wars from North Dakota  
Called forth gallant volunteers,  
Loyal men soon filled her quota,  
For them ever be our cheers.

#### VI

Here are hills and vales historic,  
Battlefields where brave men fought;  
Graves of martyrs, slain by red men  
Whose dark minds they kindly taught;  
Here long years the great Sioux Nation  
Warred and hunted kingly game,  
Here the ruins of the fortress  
Keep alive the warrior's fame.

#### VII

Gone, the trapper from the woodland;  
Gone, the hunter from the plain,  
The guide, the scout, the voyageur,  
Full long have they lowly lain.  
With his cross the missionary,  
The red Indian with his bow,  
The trader, with his train, who chased  
The elk and buffalo.

#### VIII

They have gone from North Dakota,  
From the cares of earth set free;  
But the sons of loved Dakota  
Shall preserve their memory.  
Our pioneers, who steadfastly  
Kept guard in earlier years.  
Forget them not, with gratitude  
Their memory greet with tears.

#### IX

With our starry banner floating  
Praise her, we with tongue and pen,  
Commonwealth of North Dakota,  
Home of Farmers, Land of Men.  
Stand on guard for North Dakota,  
Serve the state with purpose pure,  
Pray that long our loved Dakota  
Prosper may and aye endure.